

The Daily Tar Heel

Established 1893,
115 years
of editorial freedom

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Eduardo has a right to lux and libertas

Imagine for a second you're sitting in your 11 a.m. political science or chemistry class. Chances are you haven't bothered to notice the person sitting next to you. That is unless that person is a friend of yours.

Imagine if that seat next to you suddenly went empty. Yes, empty.

No, I'm not talking about when women, African-Americans or even communists were banned from Carolina. I'm talking about an invisible wall that is slowly being erected around us.

Raleigh continues to threaten legislation that would evict undocumented students, even those who bleed Carolina blue, like — let's call him Eduardo.

This young man was brought to this country at a young age by his parents. He had no say in his family's decision.

Circumstances moved him to this beautiful state. By his sheer determination and through academic drive, Eduardo earned his spot at our University.

No one helped him. He had no alumni connections or wealthy relatives who were held in high esteem by the Development Office. Today he is a proud Tar Heel second to none.

You'd be surprised to know there are many more cases like Eduardo's throughout this great country of ours. Specific data on how many is hard to come by, but Eduardo has undocumented friends at Harvard and Davidson.

Carolina has always been at the forefront of progressive movements. For an institution that has prided itself on leading, we can not idly stand by while our fellow brothers and sisters stand to be evicted.

UNC was the first public institution to open its doors in 1795. At one point earlier this year, N.C. legislators considered banning undocumented students from community colleges.

While the bill never passed, North Carolina should guard against owning the dubious distinction of being the first state to open its doors and one of the first to ban students from attending.

Nevertheless, the State Board of Community Colleges decided earlier this month not to admit undocumented students pending an in-depth review.

As is always the case, the critics of discrimination hold the power. The opposition is always marginalized and at a resource disadvantage.

Imagine if you asked African-Americans to marshal equal resources to overturn Plessy v. Ferguson. The odds were stacked against them from the beginning. It took almost half a century to overturn the decision.

Imagine graduating from a college that banned otherwise qualified students from attending. What kind of message does that send to applicants and graduates who hold Carolina degrees?

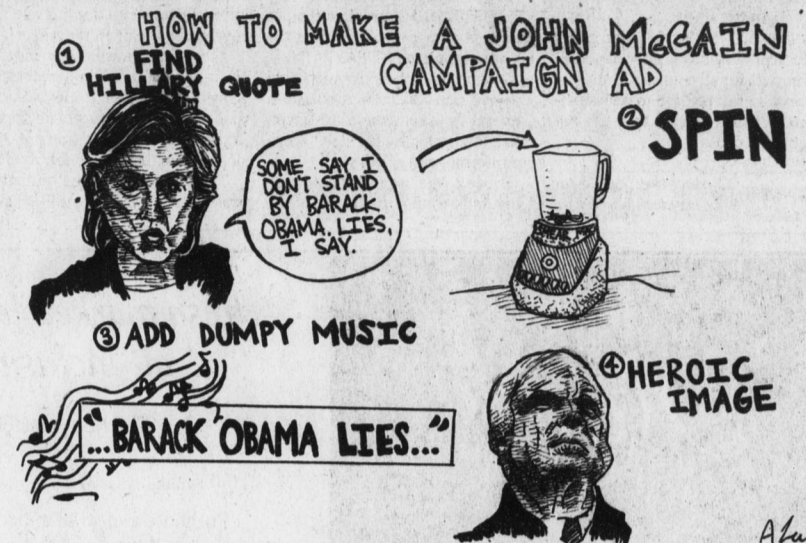
It certainly smacks of hypocrisy that an institution who proclaims to uphold lux and libertas suddenly shines a light of darkness across its prospective applicant pool.

We, as Tar Heels, should be outraged whenever politicians propose new rules that threaten to evict our peers because of decisions they had no control over.

We've faced similar moments like this in our history and we've chanted never again.

We cannot repeat our failures again. College access to qualified individuals is a human right. Politicians who pander to deep-seated fears should know better. For history is the ultimate arbiter of justice.

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Alex Lee, lobin@email.unc.edu



Ranking priorities

UNC should lead peer universities in opting out of meaningless college rankings

Every year colleges and universities hold their collective breath for U.S. News & World Report to announce the schools that reign supreme.

But there are huge problems with these rankings, which last week named UNC the fifth-best public university for the eighth consecutive year.

The rankings attempt to attach a precise figure to a process — comparing colleges — that is by nature nuanced and complex. There's simply no way to plug in a bunch of statistics and get a meaningful comparison of schools through rank.

Twelve schools — mostly smaller in size — drafted a letter last year to hundreds of college presidents protesting the rankings. Among other criticisms, the schools claimed that rankings "degrade for

students the educational value of the college search process."

This year, only 46 percent of college officials responded to the magazine's voluntary survey to collect the necessary data.

UNC was not among the universities to pull out from the voluntary contribution to the report — a de facto endorsement of the arbitrary ranking system.

And, University officials refused to comment when asked by The Daily Tar Heel if they were satisfied with being the fifth-ranked public university for eight years.

Among its peer institutions, UNC has the credibility to take a major stance against these bogus rankings. In a culture that looks to tangible and comparative statistics to define "the best," these rankings are given unnecessary weight.

But as long as major schools

still participate in the rankings, any boycott will lack validity.

The prestige attached to these rankings can create a perverse incentive for schools to improve artificially to score higher, while detracting from their objective of providing a qualitatively solid education.

For example, if a school increases the size of its applicant pool while maintaining acceptance at the same level, it will have a lower acceptance rate and thus a higher score in the rankings calculation.

It's just not possible for a one-dimensional formula to crank out a statistic that meaningfully reflects the nuance of a good college education.

Administrators at UNC should recognize that students have diverse wants and needs, and choose to opt out of the U.S. News & World Report rankings.

Actions speak louder

Nondiscrimination policy revision should be taken a step further

The University should be commended for a recent revision of its harassment and discrimination policy. The policy now includes restriction of discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression.

North Carolina currently has no laws protecting sexual minorities from discrimination. UNC's policy revision takes a progressive step in highlighting the University's attempt to create a learning environment that is inclusive of all students.

But the policy can be carried further through action-

able changes. Many of the University's current policies contradict its stated anti-discrimination policy.

For example, the UNC system does not offer partner health insurance to gay and lesbian faculty and staff.

Out of the University's 15 peer institutions — selected by the General Administration in 2006 — 11 offer full health insurance benefits to gay and lesbian partners; including Duke, Pennsylvania and Michigan universities.

The University could also

explore adopting gender-blind housing regulations for students. Based on the anti-discrimination policy, gender-restrictive rooming policies are inherently heterosexist.

Thirty-six colleges have already adopted gender-blind housing, including the University of California-Berkeley, University of Pennsylvania and University of Connecticut.

UNC has taken another step in the right direction to prevent discrimination, but must ensure that its current policies reflect that goal.

Wanted: creative scholars

New program offers students an opportunity to pursue research passions

Sometimes it can be hard for Carolina students outside the realm of the lab sciences to get involved in undergraduate research.

But the Carolina Research Scholars Program, an initiative established by former Student Body President Eve Carson, hopes to change that, increasing the scope of undergraduate research at UNC to students of all majors.

Whether you're into Shakespeare or stalactites, Bach or Byron, we encourage you to take advantage of this new and innovative opportunity.

The research scholars program involves three courses and ends with a presentation of each student's findings to a

professional audience.

Undergraduates at Carolina frequently miss out on the rewards of self-directed, investigative research, instead spending undue time seeking answers that already exist in teacher-directed settings.

The new program will help students transition from the role of novice learners to mature adults who can probe the answers to unsolved problems of the future.

The program will also be a great complement to the Public Service Scholars program, which recognizes students who complete 300 or more hours of community service before graduation.

Service-learning programs

such as APPLES focus largely on studying various cultures and providing assistance to those cultures.

The research scholars program presents a great opportunity to enhance this service-learning, allowing students to delve into their curiosities and produce findings to complement their service to the community.

More than 40 students are already enrolled in the inaugural Carolina Research Scholars class, and this is a decent number to start with. We hope that number grows exponentially as more students find ways to follow their passions through the Carolina Research Scholars Program.

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"I believe public officials should strive whenever possible to conduct their business in public."

AMANDA MARTIN, NCPA GENERAL COUNSEL

FEATURED ONLINE READER COMMENT:

"And my parents thought I didn't learn enough geography even though I was a worldwide stamp collector!"

ON CARTOON OF "AN AMERICAN'S MAP OF THE WORLD"

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Campus Y offers chance for students to give back

TO THE EDITOR:
Since its establishment in 1859, the Campus Y has been one of the most vibrant student organizations at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Through student dedication and commitment, the Y has become a leader in on-campus discussion and dialogue and off-campus service and activism.

Through the years, the Y has led the racial integration of the student body, the opposition to the Vietnam War, the effort to improve wages and working conditions for University employees, the establishment of the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History and many other efforts to improve our campus and our community.

We believe that as students of one of the most prestigious public universities, it is the duty of our students to give back to the community of which we are a part.

We are writing to encourage students to take advantage of the many fantastic opportunities given to us by our admittance to this University of the people. As John F. Kennedy said, "For those to whom much is given, much is required," and we believe this to be particularly relevant to students as the new school year begins.

Whether you choose to become a member of the Campus Y and one of its 18 committees, or you choose to join one of the other hundreds of UNC student organizations dedicated to service, we still maintain that the most formative experiences of college students' years are those spent in service to their communities.

candidates for quotes, I recommend that the writer(s) covering this year's election read up on the Student Government General Election Laws (or at least skip to Article IV, Section 402 A (5) where it clearly says that interviews with the press should not begin until 21 days before the election).

George Drometer
Junior
Political Science

Executive branch seeking student participation

TO THE EDITOR:

The Executive Branch of Student Government has released applications for more than 40 2008-09 external appointments. External appointments are positions on committees that provide the student voice and shape policy on almost every issue on campus.

Available appointments include the Student Advisory Committee to the Chancellor (first-year and transfer students only), Student Safety and Security Committee, Summer Reading Book Selection Committee and the Student Academic Advising Board, among many others.

You can fill out an application and see a full list of committees with their descriptions on the Student Government Web site (www.unc.edu/studgov). We are in search of any student applicants who are enthusiastic about serving the student body; prior experience is not necessarily required.

Applications are due 11:59 p.m. Friday, Sept. 5.

I look forward to reading your application and invite you to apply for multiple appointments.

Thank you. And good luck!

Todd Dalrymple
Student Body Vice President

Casey Beckner and Jeff Chen
Co-Presidents, Campus Y

DTH writers need to read up on election protocol

Editor's note: The Daily Tar Heel contacted three potential Student Body President candidates for "SBP races launch early" but one of the juniors declined to comment after contacting the Board of Elections chairman.

TO THE EDITOR:

I was thoroughly disappointed by the lack of objectivity on the DTH's part by printing "SBP races launch early" and doing so on the front page.

The Daily Tar Heel has made a commitment in the past to remain as fair and objective as possible in covering student elections, and this article became free advertisement for the two potential candidates featured in it. Right now is a critical time for those thinking about running for Student Body President, specifically with regards to recruiting campaign staff.

The DTH University editors should surely know that more than just two juniors are considering candidacy, and disregarding that by highlighting Ashley Klein and Matt Wohlford is a lucid example of biased journalism.

Making matters even worse is the fact that the DTH, a paper that in the past has wasted no time printing campaign violations, could very well be aiding the two featured students in breaking election laws regarding public campaigning.

Before asking more potential

Stop talking about Paris, start talking about issues

TO THE EDITOR:

Tonight in Denver Sen. Barack Obama will accept the nomination of the Democratic Party and make history. Undoubtedly, a chorus of Republican operatives will immediately begin spinning and twisting this extraordinary moment in their ruthless, predicted effort to destroy Barack.

And we, as his supporters, but more importantly as Americans, cannot let this happen. For the sake not only of the candidate we believe in, but the democracy we love, we cannot let the baseless rumors and innuendos of the far-right echo chambers tear him apart. If you watch cable news you know that they have already begun with shameless attacks on Barack's faith, his patriotism, his background, his friends, and even his wife. This is the bile of American politics that we must not only reject, but aggressively seek out and rebut.

The American people deserve an election about the fundamental problem we face: timid 20th century policies for enormous 21st century challenges. From the economy to education, energy and the environment, this election must be about bold solutions, not Britney Spears. Paris will be fine, but if we keep talking about her, I'm not so sure about my country.

Vivek Chilukuri
UNC Young Democrats,
Co-President

SPEAK OUT

WRITING GUIDELINES:

- ▶ Please type: Handwritten letters will not be accepted.
- ▶ Sign and date: No more than two people should sign letters.
- ▶ Students: Include your year, major and phone number.
- ▶ Faculty/staff: Include your

department and phone number.
▶ Edit: The DTH edits for space, clarity, accuracy and vulgarity. Limit letters to 250 words.

SUBMISSION:

- ▶ Drop-off: at our office at Suite 2409 in the Student Union.
- ▶ E-mail: to editdesk@unc.edu
- ▶ Send: to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, N.C., 27515.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Columns, cartoons and letters do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Daily Tar Heel or its staff. Editorials reflect the opinions of the Daily Tar Heel editorial board. The board consists of seven board members, the associate opinion editor, the opinion editor and the editor.